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★ MAY 11 1931 ★

U. S. Department of Agriculture

File 2
119
In 3 Hh
HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Friday, May 15, 1931

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Subject: "The Home Canner's Equipment." Information approved by the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

Bulletin available: "Canning Fruits and Vegetables at Home."

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"It won't be long now before canning season will be here," said Cousin Susan, glancing out at the garden where Uncle Ebenezer's tomato plants and peas and beans looked especially prosperous shining in the sunshine and morning dew.

Cousin Susan prides herself on being forehanded about household jobs. "I expect that some day soon I'd better be getting down the preserving kettle from the high shelf, Aunt Sammy. And then we might look over the rest of the canning equipment to see that it is all ship-shape. If we have everything assembled and in good order, we'll be all ready the minute the strawberries are ripe. The next time you go to the grocery you might buy jar rubbers. They need to be new every season. I'll check up and tell you shortly whether anything else should be bought."

Just then in came the Little Bride from across the street and, on hearing that we were discussing canning, she announced that she intended to do a lot of canning herself this summer. Her husband, she said, was working enthusiastically already over his backyard garden, so they would have fresh vegetables on their table every day this summer and the surplus could be canned for their use next winter. That garden was to be a help to their budget and their health.

"Did you ever hear that little verse about exercise and the garden, Aunt Sammy? I know it by heart because Bob recites it whenever he comes in from gardening. It goes this way:

"Stirring up the soil is good for rheumatics,
Good for your liver, your lights, and lymphatics,
Even supposing that every crop fails you,
Still the old garden is good for what ails you."

"That's right," said Cousin Susan. "More people ought to have gardens and more young housewives ought to be ambitious like yourself and put up the minerals and vitamins from the garden in cans for winter."

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"You once told me, Aunt Sammy," said the little bride, "that an important rule of efficiency in any line was: 'Have the right tool for the job.' Wouldn't it be nice if you and Cousin Susan would take this time to tell me just what utensils, big and little, the home canner needs. And remember. I'm just an amateur and need to be told all the whys and wherefores. This, you know, will be my first experience at canning and I want to make a success of it."

"Shall we begin with the large or the small equipment?" Cousin Susan asked.

"Large, please, and do talk slowly because I want to make a list. May I borrow this pencil of yours and a little paper? All right, I'm ready to learn."

The most expensive piece of canning equipment is the canner itself in which the jars of food are steamed or boiled. A hot-water outfit--and also a steamer or the oven--may be suitable for canning fruits and acid vegetables like tomatoes, but for other vegetables and for meats you must have a steam pressure cooker. Foods that are not acid can only be safeguarded from spoilage by canning at the high temperature possible under pressure.

You can buy one of the simple hot-water bath canners for fruits and acid vegetables, or you can use a home-made one. Any utensil that is large enough to hold a reasonable number of cans; that is deep enough to allow these cans to be covered with boiling water to a depth of at least an inch; and that can be fitted with a rack or a raised bottom will be suitable. This false bottom prevents the cans from resting on the bottom of the canner and insures free circulation of the water. A tight-fitting cover, of course, is needed so that the water will not boil away. Some housewives I know have successfully used tin sap buckets or clothes boilers for hot-water canning.

Next about that pressure cooker. Many good types are on the market to-day. It is best to choose one that is not too heavy if you will have to lift or move it about much yourself. The size you choose depends, of course, on the size of your family and on whether you intend to use it for ordinary cooking as well as for canning. It is a good plan to find out, before you buy, how many quart cans the different sizes will hold. The advantage of canning under pressure lies in the fact that under pressure temperatures considerably higher than that of boiling water can be obtained. The greater degree of heat, not only insures that the food is really sterilized but does this in a shorter period and thus saves both time and fuel. Even though the initial cost of a pressure cooker may seem high, it will mean economy in the long run to the home canner. The cost will be offset by the success and safety it insures in the canned foods, and by the saving of time and fuel. A canner that is not too large for convenience may be used throughout the year for cooking the less tender cuts of meat, dried beans, and other foods requiring long slow cooking.

First among the smaller pieces of equipment, the jars are to be considered. The type of jar that seems to give general satisfaction is one with a wide mouth and straight sides with a glass cover clamped on with some metal device. Whatever type you choose, be sure that it seals perfectly and washes easily, that it will protect the food inside against contact with metals, and that it has very few parts to be lost or mislaid.

As Cousin Susan said, new rubber rings should be purchased each year. Good rubber does not break easily when stretched and is elastic and not hard and brittle.

What about using tin cans for home canning? Tin does have some advantages over glass. It is easier to handle when processing under pressure; it does not break. Tin cans heat through more quickly and may be plunged into cold water immediately after processing, which, of course, is impossible with glass jars.

Now to list some of the smaller articles needed. If you plan to put up any corn this season, you will need a covered kettle large enough for blanching and a wire basket to go with it. Among the required utensils include a funnel or jar filler, to lighten the work of pouring liquid into the jars; a can lifter; two sharp stainless steel knives; measuring cups; wooden spoons, and a steel fork.

One of these days I'm going to talk about the jelly bag, which also goes on the home canner's list, but it's high time I got at the menu to-day. Our menu will be another Sunday dinner starting with a roast and finishing with a very special ice cream.

I'm all ready now to read that menu. Prime rib roast of beef; Browned potatoes; Gravy; New green beans; Stuffed celery; Radishes; and a treat for dessert in the form of Peanut brittle ice cream.

First I want to tell you how the Recipe Lady stuffs celery. Then I want you to know just how she makes that peanut brittle ice cream.

First cut the celery into pieces, convenient for handling, after washing it of course. Fill the hollow of the stalks with soft cheese--perhaps plain cream cheese or perhaps cheese mixed with chopped pimiento, green pepper, nuts, olives, or a combination of two or more of these. Serve the stuffed celery on the plate with a salad or on a platter as a relish. For our dinner, of course, it will be served with the bright red radishes.

For the ice cream there are just four ingredients:

1 quart of single cream	1/4 teaspoon of salt
1 and 1/2 to 2 cups of ground peanut brittle	1/2 cup of sugar

Once more. (Repeat).

Heat one cup of the cream to the boiling point and add the sugar and the ground peanut brittle. Stir until well-blended. Mix with the remaining cream and the salt. Use a freezing mixture of 1 part salt and 4 to 6 parts of ice and turn the crank of the freezer slowly. After freezing, remove the dasher, pack the freezer with more ice and salt, and let the cream stand for an hour or more to ripen.

On Monday we'll start off with a garden chat. The subject will be planting for canning. W.R.B. has a lot of ideas about growing vegetables and fruits to be put up for winter.

